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# Female Baby Boomers: A Generation at Work

C F O C U S O N  
A N A D A







**Focus on Canada**

## **Female Baby Boomers: A Generation at Work**

**By: Diane Galarneau**

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## Preface

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**Focus on Canada** is a series of publications portraying the people of Canada. The portrait is drawn through the analysis of the data collected by the 1991 Census of Population and Housing. Each publication examines a specific issue and provides a demographic, social, cultural and economic perspective.

The authors of this series have taken special care to make their analysis informative and easy to read. They make use of descriptive graphs and data tables to more clearly illustrate the information. Often the results are compared to previous censuses, showing how Canada and Canadians have changed over time.

The publications were prepared by analysts at Statistics Canada, and reviewed by peers from within the Agency as well as experts from external organizations. I would like to extend my thanks to all the contributors for their role in producing this useful and interesting publication.

I would like to express my appreciation to the millions of Canadians who completed their questionnaires on June 4, 1991. Statistics Canada is very pleased to be able to now provide this summary of the results. I hope you enjoy reading this study – and the others in this series.

Ivan P. Fellegi  
Chief Statistician of Canada



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## Highlights

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- Women of the baby-boom's first wave (those born between 1946 and 1955) had a higher labour force participation rate than pre-baby-boom women (1936 to 1945) and a lower rate than those of the second wave (1956 to 1965). For example, when women of the first wave were 26 to 35, their participation rate was 65%, while only 43% of pre-baby-boom and 78% of second-wave women participated at those ages.
- Labour force participation of young women (aged 16 to 25) increased over time. It went from 39% for pre-baby-boom women in 1961, to 54% for the first wavers in 1971, to 70% for the second wavers in 1981 and to 74% for women of the post-baby-boom period (born between 1966 and 1975) in 1991.
- The unemployment rate also increased for these young women over time. In 1971, 14,3% of the first wavers were unemployed compared to 18,4% for the second wavers in 1981 and to 19,2% for the post-baby-boomers in 1991. The increase reflected worsening job opportunities over the period.
- Women's education attainment increased from one group to the other. For example, at ages 26 to 35, 28% of the pre-baby-boomers had more than 13 years of education in 1971, compared with 49% of the first wavers in 1981 and 67% of the second wavers in 1991.
- Remaining single (never married) longer is becoming more common among women. At these same ages, 11% of the pre-baby-boomers were single in 1971, compared to 14% among the first wavers in 1981 and to 20% among the second wavers in 1991.
- They also tend to delay the start of their family. Between the ages of 26 to 35, 22% of the pre-baby-boomers had no child in 1971, compared with 30% of the first wavers in 1981 and 38% of the second wavers in 1991.
- Fewer and fewer women have three or more children. In 1971, 34% of the pre-baby-boomers, aged 26 to 35, had three or more children compared with 16% of the first wavers in 1981 and to 13% of the second wavers in 1991.

- Women in all groups have always been concentrated in a limited number of occupations. In fact, nearly three quarters worked in five of them: clerical and related occupations, service, sales, health care and teaching and related occupations. However, a larger proportion today are in managerial and administrative occupations as well as in sciences (natural and social) and engineering.
- Part time work is becoming increasingly common among young women (aged 16 to 25). In 1971, 26% of first wavers worked part time, compared with 32% of second wavers in 1981 and to 43% of post-baby-boomers in 1991.
- Women of the first wave experienced the most rapid growth in real employment income. For those who were working full time full year, the real employment income increased 55% between 1971 and 1981 and 10% from 1981 to 1991.
- At ages 16 to 25, the real employment income of women of the post-baby-boom period, working full year full time, was 6% lower than that of the preceding group (second wavers, at that age).
- The employment income gap between men and women (working full time full year) narrowed from one group to the next. At ages 26 to 35, real employment income of pre-baby-boom women represented 65% of that of men in 1971, compared with 71% for first wavers in 1981 and 75% for second wavers in 1991.
- Women's contribution to family employment income also increased from one group to the next: from 29% in 1971 for pre-baby-boomers to 33% for first wavers in 1981 and to 36% for those of the second wave in 1991.

## Introduction

---

Baby boomers are frequently referred to as a “privileged generation”. Some baby boomers did indeed experience good years, in part due to the modern and prosperous era that began in the postwar years and continued to the 1970s. Real income rose as never before; new technologies were developed, bringing with them new products, most of which were widely accessible. Uninterrupted consumer demand provided a constant stimulus to the economy.

While prosperity was growing, the country’s social structures changed significantly. Education and health suddenly took on new importance, leading to the construction of schools and the establishment of universal health and social services. Unemployment Insurance coverage was expanded and various public assistance plans consolidated into one Welfare plan, so as to provide a guaranteed income in case of job loss or any one of a range of disabilities. The implementation of these measures contributed greatly to public sector growth. Concurrently, more and more workers were banding together to claim higher salaries and better working conditions.

These events coincided with the massive entry of women into the labour market. But, did women of all ages participate to the same degree? Specifically, do female baby boomers differ in this regard from the women born before and after the baby boom period?

This publication, one of the “Focus on Canada” series, compares several groups of women: female baby boomers on the one hand, and those born before and after the baby boom on the other. Based on the data collected in the 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses, the changes in labour market participation rates and characteristics of these groups are analysed. Specific topics of discussion include education, marital and family status, labour force participation rate, industry and occupation, work patterns, and employment income.





# Chapter 1

## The Baby Boom

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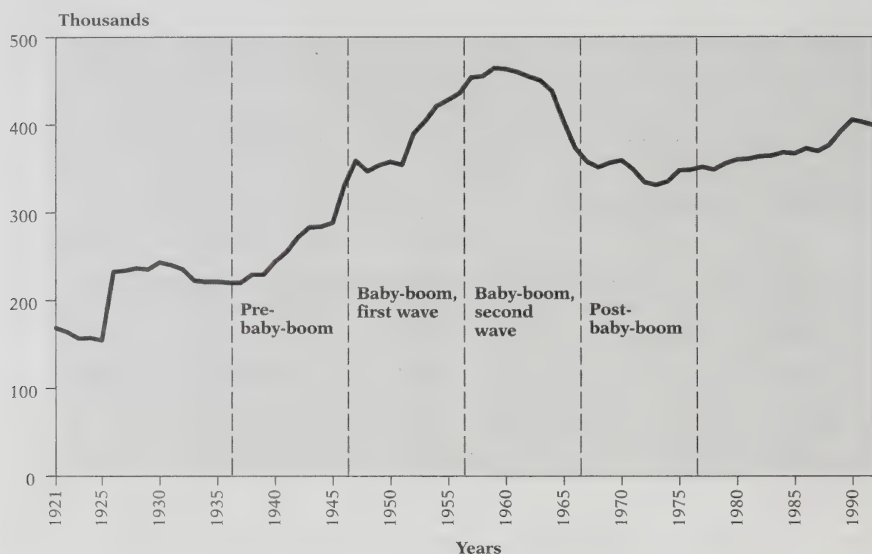
### Just What Is the Baby Boom?

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The expression “baby boom” usually designates the population explosion that occurred after the Second World War in a number of countries, including the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

There is no real consensus on the timing of the beginning and the end of the phenomenon, and the dates vary by country. In the opinion of some, the baby boom began in Canada during the war (around 1943), when the birth rate rebounded to pre-1930 depression levels. Others believe it began shortly after the war (around 1946), when soldiers returned home and the birth rate climbed sharply. Nor do demographers and historians agree on the exact timing of the end of the baby boom, although it is thought to have occurred sometime during the sixties. In general, for Statistics Canada, the baby boom covers the 20-year period from 1946 to 1965, and this is the definition used in this report (**Chart 1.1**).

**Chart 1.1**  
**Number of Live Births, Canada 1921-1992**



Sources: *Selected Birth and Fertility Statistics*, Canada, 1921-1990, Catalogue No. 82-553, and *Births* 1991, Catalogue No. 84-210 and unpublished data from the Health Statistics Division.

## Description of Groups Studied

Do female baby boomers differ from other women in terms of their labour force participation and personal and family characteristics? Are there also differences within the baby boom? Between the entry of the older baby boomers and the entry of the younger ones 20 years later, the labour market changed considerably: thus the two groups found themselves in very different economic circumstances.

To address these issues, we will distribute the women by age group and examine their characteristics at a given age but at different points in time. This method is known as cohort analysis. We compare participation rates<sup>1</sup> and characteristics for four groups of women:

- pre-baby boomers, born between 1936 and 1945;
- baby boomers, first wave, born between 1946 and 1955;



- baby boomers, second wave, born between 1956 and 1965;
- post-baby boomers, born between 1966 and 1975.

As this study targets the characteristics of women of working age, only those 16 years and over are covered. Second-wave and post-baby-boom women are not covered by all the censuses studied, because they were either too young or not yet born (**Tables 1.1 and 1.2**).

**Table 1.1**  
**Age of Women in the Four Groups, Last Three 10-year Censuses**

Year of birth	1971	1981	1991
	Age		
1936 to 1945 (pre-baby boom)	26 to 35 years	36 to 45 years	46 to 55 years
1946 to 1955 (1st wave )	16 to 25 years	26 to 35 years	36 to 45 years
1956 to 1965 (2nd wave )	6 to 15 years	16 to 25 years	26 to 35 years
1966 to 1975 (post-baby boom)	0 to 5 years	6 to 15 years	16 to 25 years

**Table 1.2**  
**Distribution of the Groups of Women 16 Years of Age and Over by Year of Birth**

Year of birth	1971	1981	1991
	Total (thousands)		
	3 316	5 802	7 954
Year of birth	Percentage		
	42	24	18
	58	36	27
	0	40	31
	0	0	24

Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.



# Chapter

## 2

### **Labour Force Participation Rate and Economic Context**

---

Throughout the analysis, it should be remembered that each group is affected by the socio-economic conditions prevalent at the time, and that the year of entry into the labour market may affect a woman's subsequent career path.

In this chapter, we describe economic conditions existing at the time each group of women were around twenty years old and ready to enter the workforce. We also examine subsequent changes in their participation rate and selected characteristics.

### **Pre-baby-boom Women**

---

When those members of the pre-baby-boom group (born between 1936 and 1945) joined the labour force in their late teens or early twenties, they did so mainly in the 1950s, when the economy was experiencing a period of general expansion that had begun at the end of the Second World War. Unemployment and inflation were low, averaging 4.5% and 1.2% a year respectively between 1951 and 1960. In this prosperous climate, new industries flourished, and a broad range of new jobs was waiting for new entrants. However, women working in the labour market were still a novel phenomenon: in 1961, only 39%<sup>1</sup> of pre-baby-boom women between the ages of 16 and 25 worked outside the home. A number of them worked in the labour market only during the few years before their marriage. It is therefore possible that only a minority of women took advantage of the promising jobs that were available.

**Table 2.1**  
**Distribution and Participation Rates of Pre-baby-boom Women by Selected**  
**Demographic and Economic Variables**

Age	1971	1981	1991	1971	1981	1991
	26 to 35 years	36 to 45 years	46 to 55 years	26 to 35 years	36 to 45 years	46 to 55 years
	Distribution (%) <sup>1</sup>			Participation rate (%) <sup>2</sup>		
<b>Education<sup>3</sup></b>						
Total	100	100	100	43	64	70
Under 9 years	23	20	18	30	48	48
9 to 13 years	49	41	42	43	63	68
Postsecondary education <sup>4</sup>	23	32	31	54	72	79
University degree	5	8	9	64	83	88
<b>Marital status</b>						
Single (never married)	11	7	6	80	79	73
Married <sup>5</sup>	83	82	77	37	62	69
Other <sup>6</sup>	6	12	17	60	74	73
<b>Presence and number of children at home</b>						
No children	22	17	45	77	78	69
Child(ren)	78	83	55	34	62	71
1 child	16	17	27	45	68	70
2 children	28	34	19	34	64	73
3 or more children	34	33	8	28	56	68
No preschool children	23	71	54	48	64	71
Preschool child(ren) <sup>7</sup>	55	12	1	28	47	60
<b>Spousal employment income<sup>8</sup></b> (constant 1990 dollars)						
Under \$10,000	9	10	21	41	58	59
\$10,000 to \$19,999	15	9	10	40	65	73
\$20,000 to \$29,999	28	16	15	41	66	72
\$30,000 to \$39,999	27	23	17	37	65	71
\$40,000 to \$49,999	11	18	14	30	62	71
\$50,000 to \$59,999	5	10	9	28	60	72
\$60,000 and over	5	14	14	25	54	70

1. The total of the percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.
2. Participation rate is defined as the proportion of the population 16 years and over that is either employed or unemployed.
3. Education is the highest level completed at the time of the census.
4. The category covers individuals with a trade school certificate or diploma, university or non-university education with or without certificate or diploma.
5. Also includes common-law-status individuals.
6. Includes widows and divorcees.
7. The presence in the home of preschool children may include the presence of older children.
8. In the case of married or common-law-status women only. Unless otherwise indicated, all the data on income refer to the year preceding the census. For example, in the 1971 Census, the income used is from 1970.

Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

However, the climate soon changed. Pre-baby-boom women began to join the workforce, increasing their participation rate to 43% in 1971, 64% in 1981 and, finally, 70% in 1991.

This spectacular increase in the participation rate between 1971 and 1991 was accompanied by a similar improvement in the group's education level (**Table 2.1**). In 1971, only 28% of these women had more than 13 years of schooling; by 1991, the figure had increased to roughly 40%<sup>2</sup>. Labour market participation generally increases with years of schooling, and this group was no exception to the rule. Between 1971 and 1991, participation rates also rose for most education levels.

Although the participation rate of pre-baby-boom women differed strongly by marital status in 1971 (37% for married and 80% for single women), in 1991, the disparity was a mere 4 points (69% and 73% respectively). Over time, the presence and number of children at home also came to have less effect on this group's participation in the labour market: in 1971, only 34% of women with children participated in the labour market; the comparable figure for 1981 was 62% and for 1991, 71%. This increase may be attributable to the fact that in 1981 and 1991, only a small minority of women in this group had preschool children. Even among those with preschool children, the participation rate increased during this period: it rose from 28% in 1971 to 47% in 1981 and 60% in 1991.

In 1971, the participation rate of pre-baby-boom women (married or common-law status) was related to their spouse's employment income. For example, it fell from 41% for spousal income below \$10,000 to 25% if it was \$60,000 and over. However, the effect appears to diminish over time. In 1991, if we ignore the "under \$10,000" category, there is virtually no difference in the participation rate of women by spousal income (it ranged from 73% to 70%). The lesser impact of spousal employment income in 1991 is attributable, in part, to a change in social standards<sup>3</sup> and also to the fact that many of these women no longer had preschool child(ren) at home. (Indeed, only 1% of them had preschool child(ren) in 1991, compared to 55% in 1971).

## Female Baby Boomers, First Wave

---

Most of the women in the first wave of the baby boom, that is those born between 1946 and 1955, entered the labour market during the 1960s, i.e., during an era of prosperity. From 1961 to 1970, production (measured by GDP in constant 1986 dollars) was increasing by an average of 5.2% annually, annual inflation averaged 2.9%, the average unemployment rate was 5.5% and the national debt had been greatly reduced as a result of economic growth.



**Table 2.2**  
**Distribution and Participation Rates of First-wave Female Baby Boomers by**  
**Selected Demographic and Economic Variables**

Age	1971	1981	1991	1971	1981	1991
	16 to 25 years	26 to 35 years	36 to 45 years	16 to 25 years	26 to 35 years	36 to 45 years
	Distribution (%) <sup>1</sup>			Participation rate (%) <sup>2</sup>		
<b>Education<sup>3</sup></b>						
Total	100	100	100	54	65	80
Under 9 years	11	9	8	36	44	56
9 to 13 years	63	42	41	50	59	76
Postsecondary education <sup>4</sup>	23	36	37	70	72	84
University degree	3	13	15	78	82	88
<b>Marital status</b>						
Single (never married)	62	14	9	57	85	81
Married <sup>5</sup>	36	78	78	48	61	79
Other <sup>6</sup>	2	9	14	60	75	82
<b>Presence and number of children at home</b>						
No children	77	30	24	60	89	85
Child(ren)	23	70	76	30	55	78
1 child	13	20	20	36	66	81
2 children	7	33	37	23	54	80
3 or more children	2	16	20	17	44	73
No preschool children	1	24	63	50	66	80
Preschool child(ren) <sup>7</sup>	22	46	13	30	50	69
<b>Spousal employment income<sup>8</sup></b> (constant 1990 dollars)						
Under \$10,000	15	10	13	46	61	74
\$10,000 to \$19,999	25	11	10	48	65	82
\$20,000 to \$29,999	35	18	15	51	66	81
\$30,000 to \$39,999	19	26	19	46	62	81
\$40,000 to \$49,999	4	19	17	39	58	80
\$50,000 to \$59,999	1	9	11	37	54	80
\$60,000 and over	1	8	15	37	51	75

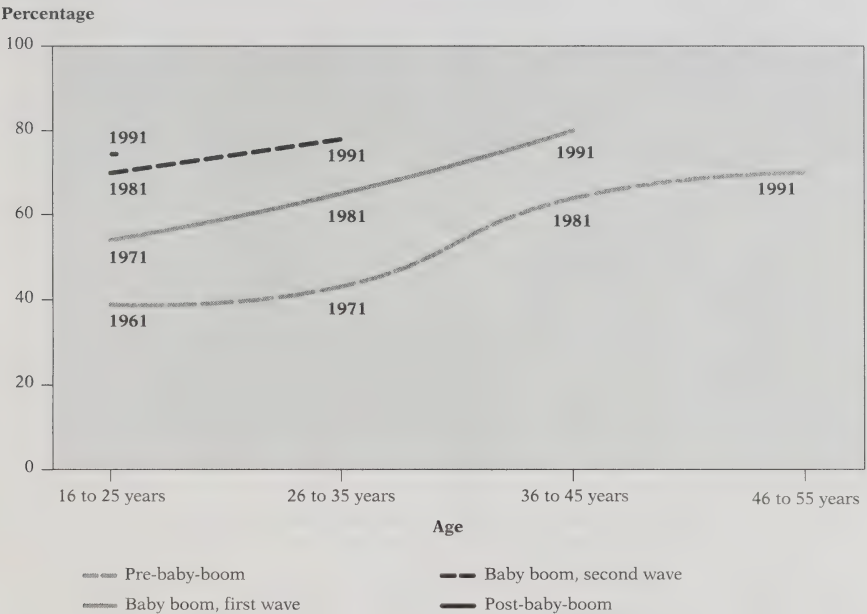
1. The total of the percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.
2. Participation rate is defined as the proportion of the population 16 years and over that is either employed or unemployed.
3. Education is the highest level completed at the time of the census.
4. The category covers individuals with a trade school certificate or diploma, university or non-university education with or without certificate or diploma.
5. Also includes common-law-status individuals.
6. Includes widows and divorcees.
7. The presence in the home of preschool children may include the presence of older children.
8. In the case of married or common-law-status women only. Unless otherwise indicated, all the data on income refer to the year preceding the census. For example, in the 1971 Census, the income used is from 1970.

Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

Employment opportunities were relatively plentiful. Even though the labour market was flooded by new entrants born in the first 10 years of the baby boom, it was capable of absorbing large numbers of these new workers. The proportion of the Canadian population that was employed (employment/population ratio) grew by nearly 5 percentage points between 1970 and 1980 (from 54.5% to 59.3%).

In 1971, the participation rate (54%) of women 16 to 25 (first-wave female baby boomers) exceeded that for pre-baby-boom women at the same age (39%), reflecting a spectacular rise in participation by women (**Chart 2.1**). Ten years later, the participation rate for the first wave was 65%; by 1991, it had reached 80%.

**Chart 2.1**  
**Participation Rate of Women by Group**

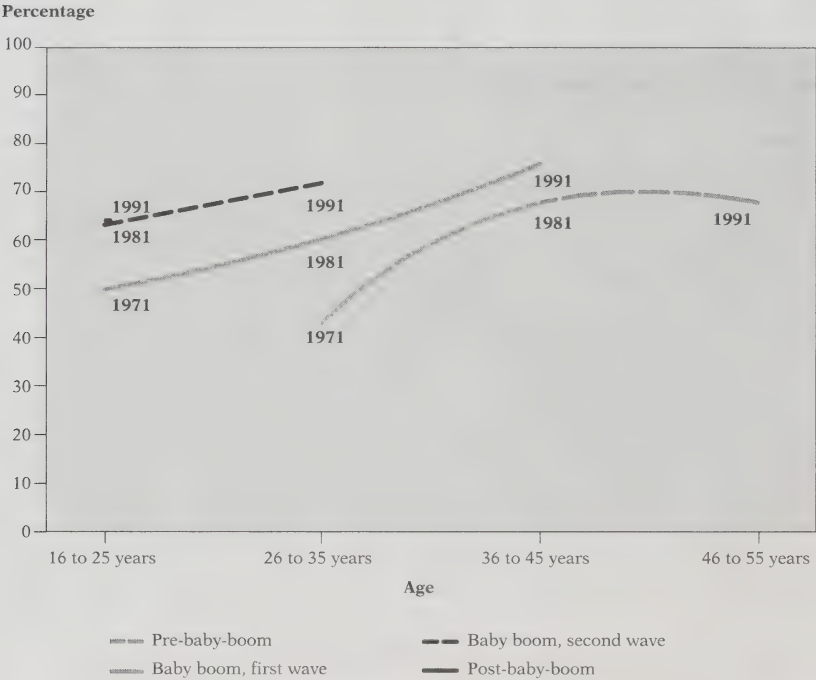


Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

We have already mentioned that the educational level of pre-baby-boom women increased between 1971 and 1991. The same was true for women in the first wave (**Table 2.2**). Furthermore, more of them received a higher education. In 1991, 52% of women in the

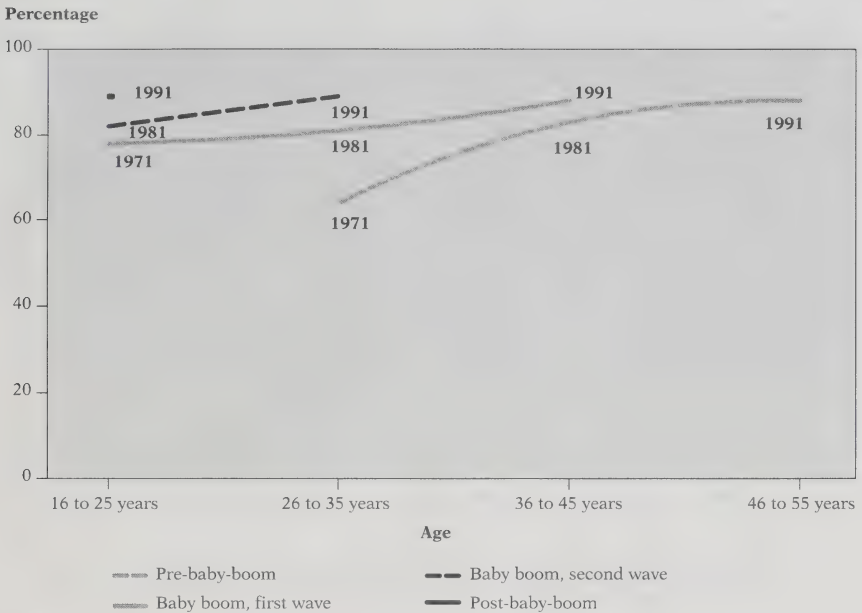
first wave had more than 13 years of schooling (compared to 40% of pre-baby-boom women at the same age, i.e., in 1981) and 15% of them had a university degree (compared to 8% of pre-baby-boom women at the same age). Also, in 1991, for each level of education, the participation rate of the first-wave female baby boomers was consistently higher than that of pre-baby-boom women at the same age, i.e., in 1981 (**Charts 2.2 and 2.3**).

**Chart 2.2**  
**Participation Rate of Women With 9 to 13 Years of Schooling by Group**



Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

**Chart 2.3**  
**Participation Rate of Women With a University Degree by Group**

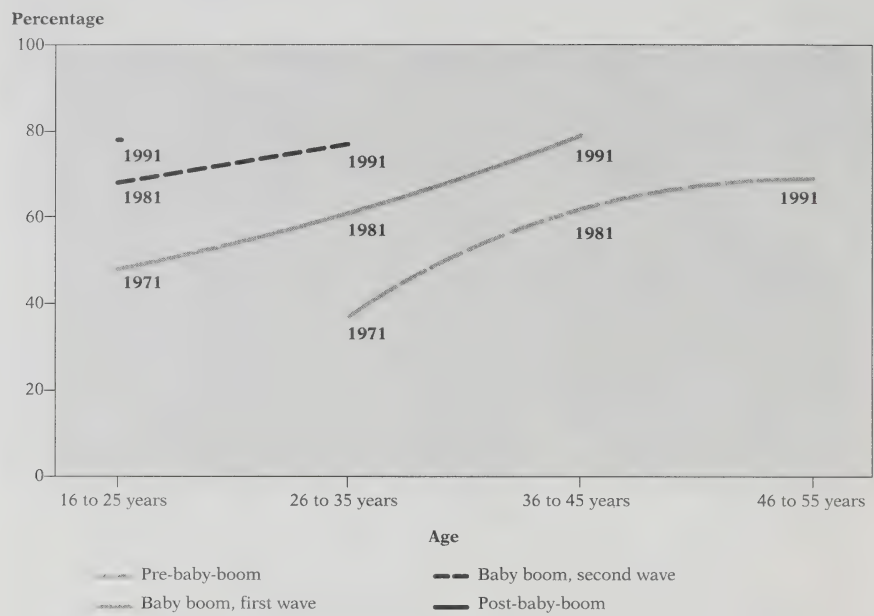


Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

As to matters of marital status and family circumstances, almost invisibly a new trend was beginning to emerge. First-wave female baby boomers were forming relationships a little later than pre-baby-boom women: between the ages of 26 and 35, 14% of them were single, compared with 11% of pre-baby-boom women at the same age; they were also more likely to be childless than pre-baby-boom women at the same age (30% compared with 22%), and much less likely to have 3 or more children (16% compared with 34%).

While these changes were occurring, the labour market participation rate of married and common-law-status women in the first wave group rose sharply (**Chart 2.4**). In 1991, when they were between the ages of 36 and 45, the disparity between their participation rate and that of single women was a mere 2 percentage points (79% and 81% respectively). When pre-baby-boom women were the same age, there was a 17-point difference between married and single women (62% and 79% respectively).

**Chart 2.4**  
**Participation Rate of Married Women by Group**

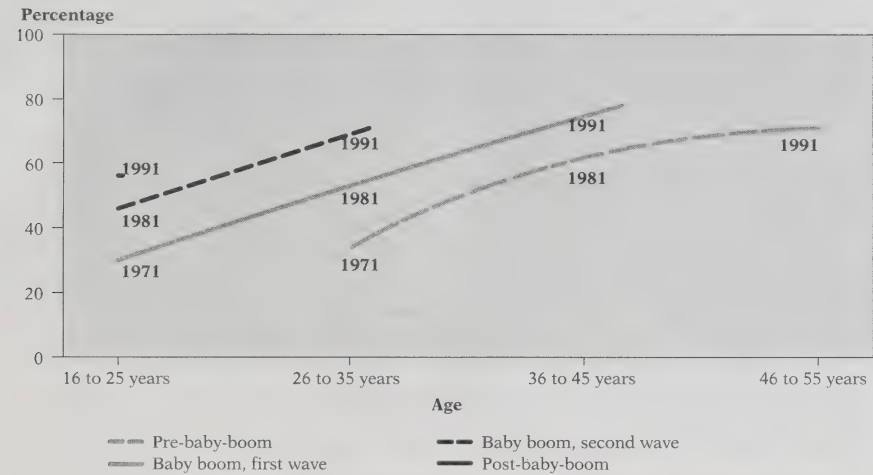


Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

Over the years, the labour market activity of pre-baby-boom women was affected less and less by the presence or age of children. The trend was even stronger among first-wave female baby boomers (**Chart 2.5**). First-wave female baby boomers 26 to 35 years of age participated to a far greater extent than pre-baby-boom women with the same number of children the same age. For example, the participation rate for first-wave female baby boomers with at least one preschool child was 50% in 1981, compared with 28% for pre-baby-boom women at the same age in 1971 (**Chart 2.6**).

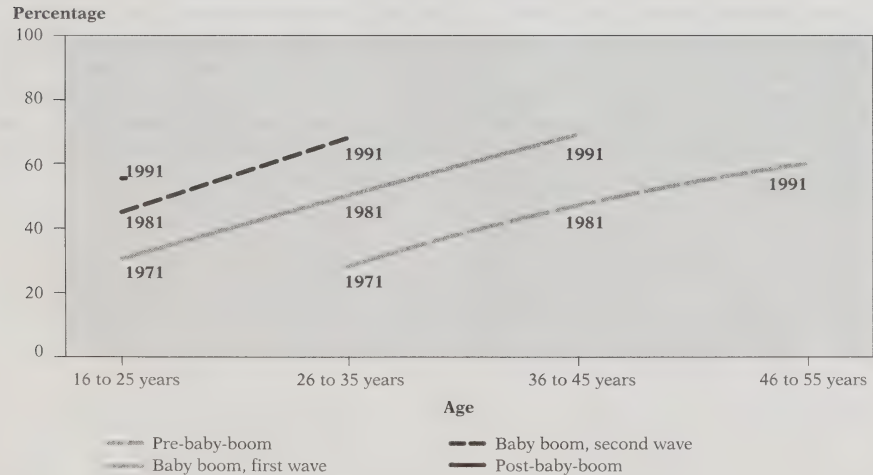


**Chart 2.5**  
**Participation Rate of Women With at Least One Child by Group**



Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

**Chart 2.6**  
**Participation Rate of Women With at Least One Preschool Child by Group**



Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

Up until 1981, there appears to be a relationship between spousal employment income and participation rate for first wave married or common-law status women. However, in 1991, when these women were between 36 and 45 years old, this relationship virtually disappeared. Pre-baby-boom women did not experience the weakening of this link until they were 46 to 55 years of age. Furthermore, compared with pre-baby-boom women, the relationship of participation rate to spousal employment income was more subtle for first-wave female baby boomers at every level of employment income (**Table 2.2**).

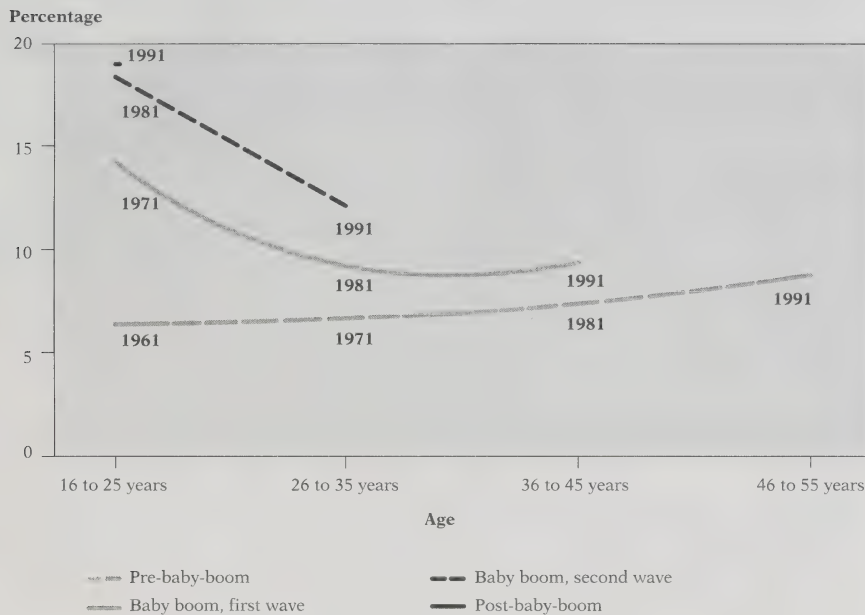
## **Female Baby Boomers, Second Wave**

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The majority of the second-wave female baby boomers, born between 1956 and 1965, entered the labour market during the 1970's, a period of more moderate growth. Indeed, the rate of GDP increase after the 1974-1975 recession dropped considerably: it fell from 5.2% annually between 1971 and 1975 to an average of 3.9% from 1976 to 1980. This recession was followed by significant inflation: whereas consumer price increases in the sixties were barely 3% per year, in the seventies the average annual increase was 8.1%. During this period, the unemployment rate also began to edge up, from an average of 5.0% in the sixties, to 5.8% in the first half of the seventies and 7.6% in the second half.

Participation of women in the labour market was increasingly common in 1981: 70% of women in the second wave of the baby boom (those aged 16 to 25) were in the labour force. The proportion of these women who were employed (57%) exceeded the figure for their predecessors (the first-wave female baby boomers) at the same age (46%). The labour market succeeded in absorbing a major part of the group. (Indeed, it was over the 10-year period when these women were born that the number of births reached its peak (**Chart 1.1**)). However, because of the large number of second-wave female baby boomers, their greater participation in the labour market, and the fact that some of them entered the market at a time when it was showing signs of slowing down, it was more difficult to find jobs. In 1981, the unemployment rate for second-wave female baby boomers (16-25 years of age) was higher than it had been for their first-wave counterparts at the same age (18.4% compared with 14.3%), revealing a surplus in the labour market (**Chart 2.7**).

**Chart 2.7**  
**Unemployment Rate of Women by Group**



Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

**Table 2.3****Distribution and Participation Rates of Second-wave Female Baby Boomers and Post-baby-boom Women by Selected Demographic and Economic Variables**

Age	Baby boom, second wave		Post- baby-boom	Baby boom, second wave		Post- baby-boom
	1981	1991	1991	1981	1991	1991
	16 to 25 years	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years	16 to 25 years	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years
	Distribution (%) <sup>1</sup>			Participation rate (%) <sup>2</sup>		
<b>Education<sup>3</sup></b>						
Total	100	100	100	70	78	74
Under 9 years	4	4	3	43	50	44
9 to 13 years	60	40	51	63	72	64
Postsecondary education <sup>4</sup>	31	41	40	82	83	86
University degree	5	16	7	82	89	89
<b>Marital status</b>						
Single (never married)	65	20	73	70	85	73
Married <sup>5</sup>	33	72	25	68	77	78
Other <sup>6</sup>	2	8	1	70	76	66
<b>Presence and number of children at home</b>						
No children	83	38	87	75	91	77
Child(ren)	17	62	13	46	71	56
1 child	11	21	9	53	78	61
2 children	5	28	4	38	71	49
3 or more children	1	13	1	28	60	35
No preschool children	1	19	1	65	78	74
Preschool child(ren) <sup>7</sup>	17	43	13	45	68	55
<b>Spousal employment income<sup>8</sup></b> (constant 1990 dollars)						
Under \$10,000	17	13	23	65	72	69
\$10,000 to \$19,999	19	13	22	71	79	80
\$20,000 to \$29,999	26	20	25	73	81	82
\$30,000 to \$39,999	23	23	18	68	79	82
\$40,000 to \$49,999	10	15	7	63	76	79
\$50,000 to \$59,999	3	8	3	57	73	76
\$60,000 and over	2	8	2	57	70	75

1. The total of the percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.
2. Participation rate is defined as the proportion of the population 16 years and over that is either employed or unemployed.
3. Education is the highest level completed at the time of the census.
4. The category covers individuals with a trade school certificate or diploma, or university or non-university education with or without certificate or diploma.
5. Also includes common-law-status individuals.
6. Includes widows and divorcees.
7. The presence in the home of preschool children may include the presence of older children.
8. In the case of married or common-law-status women only. Unless otherwise indicated, all the data on income refer to the year preceding the census. For example, in the 1971 Census, the income used is from 1970.

Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

The demographic variables and participation rates (**Table 2.3**) confirm that the trends observed among first-wave female baby boomers continued and, in general, were even more pronounced among second-wave female baby boomers. These women compared with their predecessors, continued to raise their education level, waited longer before entering a relationship, and had fewer and fewer children.

However, their participation rate was higher than that of first-wave female baby boomers at the same age, regardless of education level, marital status, and number and age of children.

In 1991, spousal employment income still had some impact on the labour market participation of second-wave female baby boomers, who were then between the ages of 26 and 35. (As mentioned before, the effect of this variable for first-wave female baby boomers, dropped off when they were between 36 and 45 years of age).

## **Post-baby-boom Women**

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It was mainly in the 1980s that women of the post-baby-boom, born between 1966 and 1975, joined the labour market. During these years, annual GDP growth was slowing: from 4.6% between 1971 and 1980, it fell to 2.9% between 1981 and 1990.

The inflation triggered by the oil crisis of the early seventies continued to rise, reaching the alarming rates of 12.4% in 1981 and 10.9% in 1982. Although inflation did drop in 1983, falling global demand forced many companies to shut down or cut back their activities significantly. Jobs were lost, and remained lost after the recession ended.

During the recession, the unemployment rate reached record highs of more than 11%, and persistent unemployment dominated the recovery of the eighties. The unemployment rate remained above 10% until 1985. It was not until 1989 that it returned to its pre-recession (1981-1982) level of 7.5%. For the last few years, the service sector was expanding and its preference for part-time jobs intensifying; as a result, the share of part-time employment grew at the expense of full-time jobs. Part-time employment increased from 11% of total employment in 1975 to 17% in 1993. Due to the lack of full-time jobs, many part-time workers joined the ranks of the underemployed, reflecting the deterioration of the job situation.

The long-term effects of the most recent recession (1990-1992) are still difficult to assess. However, the unemployment and national debt problems of the preceding decade are still with us. Market globalization and the management practices of today's companies – reorganize and streamline – often result in layoffs and further unemployment.

In spite of these economic conditions, the participation rate of 1991 labour market entrants (post-baby-boom women) exceeded that of their predecessors, (the second-wave female baby boomers) at the same age (74% compared with 70%). The proportion of the employed population continued to grow, although more slowly than the preceding group at



the same age (60% compared to 57%). However, the increase in this rate may be attributable not to the labour market's increased capacity to absorb additional workers, but to the fact that post-baby-boom women are far fewer in number than the second-wave. The unemployment rate for post-baby-boom women also reflects young women's deteriorating employment prospects in 1991, as their unemployment rate reached 19.2%, the highest level for all entrant groups.

This group has continued the general trends of first and second wave baby-boom women in education, marital status, fertility and participation rate (**Table 2.3**). However, part-time work was more common among post-baby-boom women. Also, whether they worked part-time or full-time, their employment income was lower than that of their counterparts in the preceding group.

*Participation Rate of Women in Lone-parent Families*

The number of lone mothers has increased sharply since 1971. For all age categories together, their number has risen from 370,000 (1971) to almost 800,000 (1991).

**Table 2.4**  
**Participation Rates of Women in the Four Groups by Family Type and Presence of Preschool Child(ren)**

Group	1971		1981			1991			
	Pre-baby-boom	1st wave	Pre-baby-boom	1st wave	2nd wave	Pre-baby-boom	1st wave	2nd wave	Post-baby-boom
	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years	36 to 45 years	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years	46 to 55 years	36 to 45 years	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years
Age	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years
Percentage									
Family type									
Preschool child(ren)									
Lone-parent family	43	42	54	58	47	61	66	59	42
Two-parent family	27	29	46	49	45	60	69	69	60
No preschool children									
Lone-parent family	62	58	73	71	62	75	81	74	67
Two-parent family	46	48	63	66	66	70	80	80	78

Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

For women with children at home, the presence or absence of a spouse is an important variable in the decision to participate in the labour market. However, the effect of this variable is unclear. In fact, in 1971 and 1981, lone mothers showed, in general, a higher participation rate than mothers in two-parent families. In 1991, the situation was just the opposite. Although the participation rate rose for both groups, the rate for mothers in two-parent families rose more rapidly throughout the 1971 to 1991 period; by 1981, they had almost caught up to lone mother parents. It should also be pointed out that more lone mothers worked full year, full time.

The fact that many lone mothers receive social assistance (Galarneau, 1992)<sup>4</sup> and other benefits may partly explain the slower increase in these women's participation rates. Since taking a job outside the home would cost some of these women a portion or all of these sources of income, they may choose not to enter the workforce unless the expected employment income more than offset the income lost from the other sources. According to L.M. Powell<sup>5</sup>, in 1989 the employment income threshold at which it becomes profitable for a typical female lone parent to work outside the home is approximately \$20,000.

Relatively fewer mothers in two-parent families receive social assistance (Galarneau, 1992)<sup>4</sup>. Thus, these women rarely lose a source of income by going out to work; instead, they increase family income. This factor explains in part the more rapid increase in their participation rate between 1971 and 1991.



# Chapter

## 3

### Industry, Occupation and Work Pattern

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As this section deals with the industry and occupation of women in the labour market, we include only women who had jobs at the time of the census.

#### Industry

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Traditionally, women have worked in a limited number of industries, and the groups studied confirm this. Regardless of the group or the year studied, nearly three quarters of women were concentrated in three industries: manufacturing, trade, and services (**Table 3.1**).

In 1981 and 1991, women between the ages of 16 and 25 (second-wave female baby boomers and post-baby-boom women) were more likely than others to work in the trade sector. When second wavers reached the ages 26 to 35, their share of employment in trade fell while in services it increased. This shift may be related to the fact that jobs in trade are often temporary and working conditions less than ideal. With time and experience, women may have gained access to better positions, even if they remained in the predominantly female industries, and often did so at lower pay than that offered in the predominantly male industries.

Over the years, the number of pre-baby-boom women and first-wave female baby boomers in the service sector also increased. Total employment in this sector has been growing since 1975 and it remains the sector most often chosen by women, accounting for 40% to 47% of working women in each group.

Between 1971 and 1991, the proportion of women working in manufacturing fell from 15% to 7% for all the groups. This sharp drop is closely linked to the decline in the share of total employment in that industry over a number of years.

**Table 3.1**  
**Distribution of the Groups of Women by Industry**

Groupe	1971		1981			1991			
	Pre-baby-boom	1st wave	Pre-baby-boom	1st wave	2nd wave	Pre-baby-boom	1st wave	2nd wave	Post-baby-boom
	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years	36 to 45 years	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years	46 to 55 years	36 to 45 years	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years
Age									
Percentage <sup>1</sup>									
Industry									
Primary <sup>2</sup>	4	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	3
Manufacturing	15	14	14	13	12	10	10	10	7
Construction	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	1
Transportation, Communications and Other Utilities	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	3
Trade	13	15	17	14	20	15	14	14	24
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	7	8	7	9	9	7	8	9	6
Service <sup>3</sup>	43	40	44	45	40	47	47	44	45
Public Administration and Defence	5	6	6	8	7	6	8	8	6
Other <sup>4</sup>	9	9	3	2	3	4	4	4	5

1. The total of the percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

2. The "Primary" category includes the following industries: agriculture, hunting and fishing, forestry and mining.

3. The service category includes corporate services, teaching, health care, social services, and lodging and food and beverage services.

4. The "Other" category includes indeterminate and unspecified activities.

Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.



## Occupation

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Women are concentrated in a limited number of occupations, just as is the case in industries. In fact, nearly three quarters of women work in five occupations (**Table 3.2**). Clerical and related occupations head the list, followed by service occupations, sales, health care, and finally teaching and related occupations.

Minor but interesting shifts occurred in women's occupations. For example, from 1971 to 1991, managerial and administrative occupations became more common in the first three groups (pre-baby-boom women, first-wave and second-wave female baby boomers). The shift was most marked among second-wave female baby boomers<sup>1</sup>. This same group also shifted from clerical work and service occupations to sciences (natural and social) and engineering, teaching and health care occupations. These shifts may be attributable to the fact that second-wavers' education improved between 1981 and 1991. However, the shift to managerial positions and sciences (natural and social) and engineering reflects, among other things, a change in attitude, as these positions have traditionally been occupied by men. That same change in attitude also partly explains the similar shift into managerial positions observed among the pre-baby-boom women. Also, specific demographic factors (e.g., lower fertility, later age at first birth) and structural factors (e.g., affirmative action) probably facilitated the change.

Furthermore, according to a recent study (Stout, 1992)<sup>2</sup>, the number of women who study and are qualified in fields formerly dominated by men has been rising. For example, in 1975, 18 fields of study were classified as predominantly male, due to the small proportion of women graduates. In 1990, the number of male-dominated fields had fallen to 12, and "Business Management and Commerce", was the second choice of female students. In 1975, this field had not even been among the top 10 options.

Sales and service occupations attracted a larger proportion of post-baby-boom women than women in the first and second waves of the baby boom at the same age. This may be partly attributable to the expansion of the service industries since the mid-seventies.

**Table 3.2**  
**Distribution of the Groups of Women by Occupation**

Occupation	1971		1981			1991			
	Pre-baby-boom	1st wave	Pre-baby-boom	1st wave	2nd wave	Pre-baby-boom	1st wave	2nd wave	Post-baby-boom
	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years	36 to 45 years	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years	46 to 55 years	36 to 45 years	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years
	Percentage <sup>1</sup>								
Managerial and Administrative	2	1	5	6	2	8	10	9	3
Natural Sciences, Engineering, Social Sciences, Religion and the Arts	3	3	4	6	5	5	7	8	6
Teaching	11	6	9	9	2	8	9	6	3
Health Care	11	8	9	11	6	9	10	9	5
Clerical	32	37	32	35	39	28	29	31	32
Sales	6	7	10	7	10	10	9	8	14
Service	11	15	14	11	19	15	13	14	23
Agriculture	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2
Product Fabricating	5	4	6	4	4	4	3	3	2
Other <sup>2</sup>	5	5	6	5	6	5	5	5	4
Not classified <sup>3</sup>	11	10	3	3	4	5	4	5	7

1. The total of the percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.
2. The category "other" covers women working in the following occupation categories: fishing, trapping and related occupations; forestry and logging occupations; mining and quarrying including oil and gas field occupations; processing occupations, machining and related occupations; construction trades occupations; transport equipment operating occupations; materials handling and related occupations; other crafts and equipment operating occupations.
3. The "not classified" category also includes unreported occupations.

Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

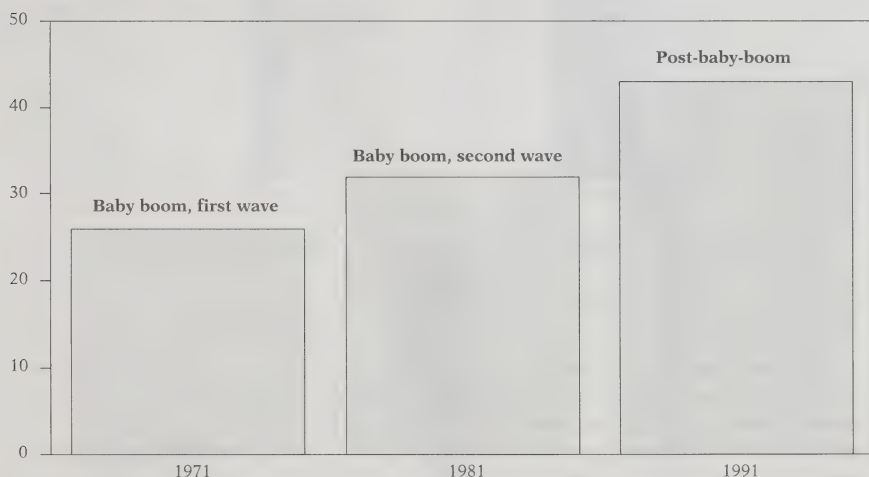
## Work Patterns

Women have always been more likely to work part-time than men. This was still true in 1991, although the trend changed somewhat over the 20-year period.

It became more and more common for 16 to 25 year-olds to work part-time. The proportion of young women doing so climbed from 26% to 32% to 43% between 1971 and 1991 (**Chart 3.1**). At the same time, as mentioned earlier, the participation rate of this age group also increased. Thus, although more young women were participating in the labour market, a larger proportion of them were working part time. This phenomenon partly reflects the fact that, in recent years, more and more young women have been combining education and work (Sunter, 1993)<sup>3</sup>

**Chart 3.1**  
**Part-time Work Increasing among Women 16 to 25 Years**

Percent of each group  
working part-time



Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

Furthermore, the data from each census shows that close to three quarters of women aged 26 years and over were working full time (**Chart 3.2**). It is interesting to note that more detailed data indicate that, since 1971, full-year work (full time or part time) has shown an upward trend in the groups 26 years and over.

**Chart 3.2**  
**Most Women 26 Years and Over Work Full-time**



Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

This distribution of women between full-time and part-time work hides a significant change: the increase in involuntary part-time work. In fact, although the proportion of women working part time has remained little changed since 1980, the proportion working part time involuntarily has increased from 17% in 1980 to 34% in 1993 (Noreau, 1994)<sup>4</sup>. The increase occurred mainly among women between the ages of 25 and 44, the largest pool of part-time labour. Although men are also increasingly affected by the involuntary part-time work phenomenon, in 1993 more than twice as many women as men (510,000 women but 250,000 men) experienced this form of underemployment.

Other studies (Mayer, 1993<sup>5</sup>; Light and Uranda, 1992<sup>6</sup>; Lindeboom and Theeuwes, 1991<sup>7</sup>; Blank, 1989<sup>8</sup>) note that the part-time work experience affects the entry and exit of individuals in the labour market; for example, it increases the possibility of being unemployed or out of the labour market.

As Mayer (1993)<sup>9</sup> notes, it

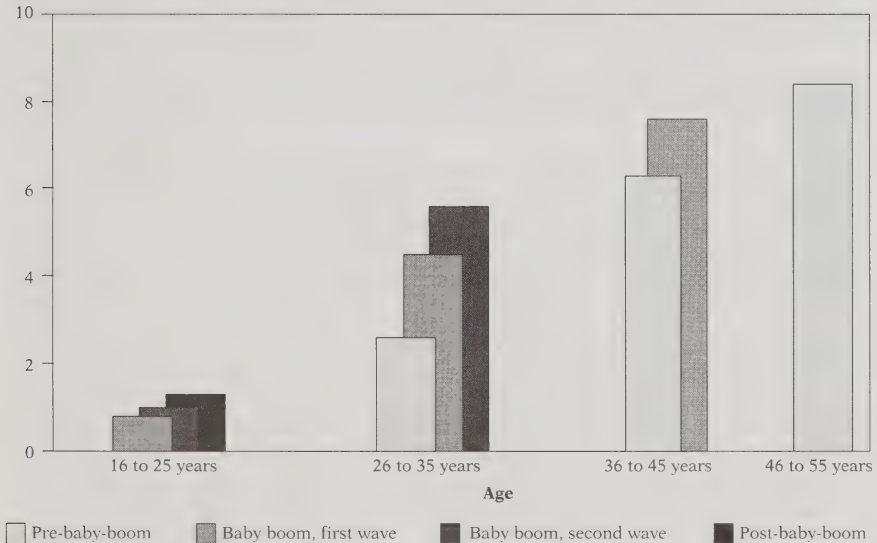
“can be costly for part-time workers, especially in terms of low accumulation of human capital, and can give potential employers an impression of low productivity ... It may have long-term effects, especially on remuneration ... The part-time work experience has an impact on duration of unemployment ... The impact of part-time work experience on duration of unemployment is greater for women”.

[Translation]

Generally speaking, the proportion of self-employed women has risen over the past three censuses (**Chart 3.3**). This same phenomenon has also occurred among men. But even though women are underrepresented in the self-employed category, their numbers are increasing far more rapidly than those of men<sup>10</sup>.

**Chart 3.3**  
**Proportion of Self-employed Women by Group**

Percentage of total employment  
for each group



Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.





# Chapter

## 4

### Real Employment Income

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Has there been any improvement in the level of real employment income for the various groups over time? To answer this question, we distributed the women by work pattern, i.e., full time or part time, full year or part year. We will begin by looking at the employment income of women working full year, full time.

#### Real Employment Income of Women Working Full Year Full Time

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From 1971 to 1981, the average real employment income of the pre-baby-boom and the first wave baby boomers working full-time, full-year rose considerably, by 25% and 55% respectively (**Table 4.1, Rate 1**). This fast growth can partly be attributed to the general prosperity and the accompanying large wage increases experienced during the 1970s. The relatively greater increase for the first wave was partly due to the fact that they were better educated and in an age group (26 to 35) when chances of promotion and access to higher paying jobs are better.

These large real employment income increases were not repeated in the subsequent decade (1981-91) for the first two groups. The increase during this period amounted to only 5% and 10% respectively, and largely reflected the slowdown in real wage growth of the period. For the second wave baby-boom, however, income growth was a large one (31%), principally for the same reasons applicable to the first wave group at the same age (i.e., better education and access to better jobs).

On a group by group basis, we also observe a substantial increase in real employment income during the prosperous 1971-1981 decade: namely, 25% for the first wave (compared to the pre-baby-boom group at the same age) and 17% for the second wave (compared to the first wave at the same age) (**Table 4.1, Rate 2**). However, the situation changed dramatically in the less prosperous 1981-1991 decade. Over this period, comparative declines in real employment income were observed among the second and post-baby-boom groups. The latter group experienced a substantial decline (-6%) compared with women in the second wave (**Table 4.1, Rate 2**).

**Table 4.1****Average Real Employment Income of the Groups of Women Working Full Year Full Time**

Group	Age	Average employment income <sup>1</sup>	Rate 1 <sup>2</sup>	Rate 2 <sup>3</sup>
		(constant 1990 dollars)	Percentage	
1971				
Pre-baby-boom	26 to 35 years	20 940	-	-
1st wave	16 to 25 years	16 896	-	-
1981				
Pre-baby-boom	36 to 45 years	26 273	25	-
1st wave	26 to 35 years	26 192	55	25
2nd wave	16 to 25 years	19 783	-	17
1991				
Pre-baby-boom	46 to 55 years	27 547	5	-
1st wave	36 to 45 years	27 703	10	9
2nd wave	26 to 35 years	25 875	31	-1
Post-baby-boom	16 to 25 years	18 543	-	-6

1. Employment income always refers to the year preceding the census.
2. Ten-year growth rate of average employment income for each group. For example, between 1970 and 1980 the average employment income of first-wave female baby boomers rose 57% (from \$16,896 to \$26,192).
3. Growth rate in the employment income of each group compared with that of the preceding group at the same age. For example, in 1980 the average employment income of first-wave female baby boomers was 25% higher than that of pre-baby-boom women in 1970, when they were the same age (\$26,192 compared to \$20,940).

Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

In conclusion, it must be added that this stagnation (in some cases, a decline) in employment income between 1981 and 1991 is not exclusive to women. In a recent study, Morissette et al. (1993)<sup>1</sup> observed similar trends for men and women over the 1981-1988 time period.

## Real Employment Income of Women Working Part Time or Part Year

The average employment income of women who work part time and women who work part year are examined together (**Table 4.2**). The reason for this is that the "link"<sup>2</sup> to the labour market is probably far weaker for a large number of these women than for those who work full year, full time.

If we compare this group to the women who work full year, full time, a number of interesting differences emerge. Over the first decade, the employment income of pre-baby-boom women showed a modest rise (**Table 4.2, Rate 1: 13%**), while it climbed sharply for first-wave female baby boomers (**Table 4.2, Rate 1: 63%**). This is comparable to the situation for women working full year, full time.

**Table 4.2**  
**Average Employment Income of the Groups of Women Working Part Time or Part Year**

Group	Age	Average employment income <sup>1</sup>	Rate 1 <sup>2</sup>	Rate 2 <sup>3</sup>
		(constant 1990 dollars)	Percentage	
1971				
Pre-baby-boom	26 to 35 years	10 885	-	-
1st wave	16 to 25 years	7 310	-	-
1981				
Pre-baby-boom	36 to 45 years	12 252	13	-
1st wave	26 to 35 years	11 917	63	9
2nd wave	16 to 25 years	7 110	-	-3
1991				
Pre-baby-boom	46 to 55 years	14 129	15	-
1st wave	36 to 45 years	14 528	22	19
2nd wave	26 to 35 years	12 710	79	7
Post-baby-boom	16 to 25 years	6 391	-	-10

1. Employment income always refers to the year preceding the census.
2. Ten-year growth rate in average employment income for each group. For example, the average employment income of pre-baby-boom women increased 13% between 1970 and 1980 (from \$7,310 to \$11,917).
3. Growth rate in average employment income for each group compared with the preceding group. For example, in 1980 the average employment income of first-wave female baby boomers was 9% higher than that of pre-baby-boom women in 1970, when they were the same age (\$11,917 compared to \$10,885).

Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

However, from 1981 to 1991, the employment income of the first three groups of women (pre-baby-boom, first and second waves) working part time or part year rose considerably (**Table 4.2, Rate 1: 15%, 22% and 79%, respectively**); the increase for women working full year, full time was more modest (**Table 4.1, Rate 1: 5%, 10% and 31% respectively**). Morissette et al. (1993)<sup>4,1</sup> observe the same phenomenon in the 1981-1988 period for women who had at least a part-time job during the year. The study attributes the greater increase in

real employment income earned by these women to an increase in the number of hours worked.

The comparison between 1971 and 1981, from one group of women to the next at the same age, indicates a far smaller increase in average real employment income among women working part time or part year (**Table 4.2, Rate 2:** 9% and -3%) than among women working full time full year (**Table 4.1, Rate 2:** 25% and 17%). But, between 1981 and 1991, the situation of both first- and second-wave female baby boomers, working either part time or part year, improved (**Table 4.2, Rate 2:** by 19% and 7%, respectively) compared to their predecessors at the same age; the disparity is smaller for women working full time full year (**Table 4.1, Rate 2:** 9% and -1%, respectively).

In 1991, the real employment income of young women (post-baby-boom women) showed no improvement at all. Whether they worked full year full time (**Table 4.1**), part time or part year (**Table 4.2**), their average real employment income was consistently lower than that of second-wave female baby boomers at the same age (**Table 4.1, Rate 2:** -6% and **Table 4.2, Rate 2:** -10%).

## Comparison of Real Employment Income Earned by Men and Women

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Generally speaking, the average employment income of men has always been higher than that of women. A number of factors explain this disparity: differences in industrial and occupational concentration, women's more frequent interruption of labour market participation and the fact that, even when they do hold full-time jobs, their previous experience, more often than men's, consists of part-time work (Mayer, 1993)<sup>3,5</sup>. These factors, combined with the possible existence of sexual discrimination in some occupations and with different levels of education between men and women, explain in large part the disparity in employment income.

To compare the employment income of women and men, we have devised a female/male average real employment income ratio as a function of each group's education level, covering only individuals working full year full time (**Table 4.3**). A value of 100 indicates absolute equality between the two incomes and a value of less than 100 that women have a lower employment income<sup>3</sup>.

Considering that women are now better educated, that they have entered fields formerly almost exclusively male, and that they have substantially increased their presence in the labour market, has their employment income moved closer to that of men? In other words, has the value of the ratio risen?

If we compare the ratio for each group over time (**Table 4.3**), a declining trend emerges: the disparity between the average real employment income of men and women tends to increase with age. For example, for pre-baby-boom women, the ratio fell from 65 to 61; for first-wave female baby boomers, from 76 to 67; and, for second-wave female baby boomers,

from 77 to 75. This pattern may be due to men's employment income rising more rapidly than that of women.

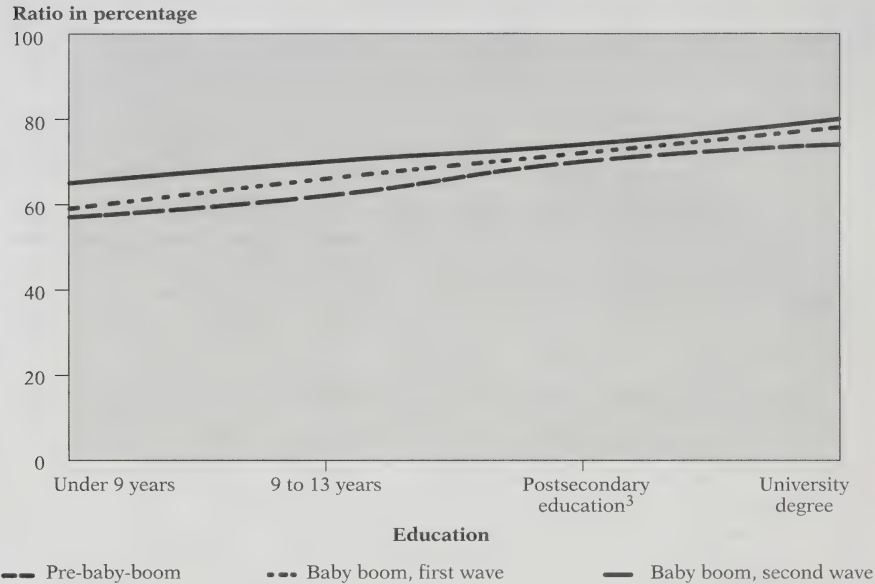
**Table 4.3**  
**Employment Income Ratio<sup>1</sup> (female/male<sup>2</sup>) by Education**

Group	1971			1981			1991			
	Pre-baby-boom	1st wave		Pre-baby-boom	1st wave	2nd wave	Pre-baby-boom	1st wave	2nd wave	Post-baby-boom
	Age	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years	36 to 45 years	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years	46 to 55 years	36 to 45 years	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years
Percentage										
Education										
Total		65	76	60	71	77	61	67	75	83
Under 9 years		57	66	56	60	69	58	60	65	74
9 to 13 years		62	72	58	66	74	60	65	70	78
Postsecondary education <sup>3</sup>		70	79	63	72	76	64	68	74	82
University degree		73	92	67	78	86	66	73	80	90

1. Ratio calculated from employment income for years preceding the census.
2. Only women and men working full year full time (49 to 52 weeks) are included in the ratio.
3. This category includes individuals with a trade school certificate or diploma, some university education or other non-university education without certificate or diploma, and university education or other non-university education with certificate or diploma.

Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

**Chart 4.1**  
**Employment Income Ratio<sup>1</sup> (female/male)<sup>2</sup> by Education for Women 26 to 35 Years of Age by Group**



1. Ratio calculated from employment income for years preceding the census.
  2. Only women and men working full year full time (49 to 52 weeks) are included in the ratio.
  3. This category includes individuals with a trade school certificate or diploma, some university or non-university education with or without certificate or diploma,
- Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

However, for women 26 to 35 years, the employment income gap narrows at all levels of education with each census (**Chart 4.1**). The total ratio for the groups 26 to 35 years of age rises from 65 for pre-baby-boom women (1970) to 71 for first-wave female baby boomers (1980), to 75 for second-wave female baby boomers (1990). This ratio also clearly establishes the relationship of income and education: the two variables increased for all groups, in all censuses.

The disparity between the employment income of women and men tends to increase with age because men's employment income increases more rapidly than women's. Consequently, the gap is narrower in the younger groups.



It should be noted that, at each census, those in the 16 to 25 age group sometimes display very high ratios. Because many men and women in this age group have not settled into a stable job and have little experience in the labour market, their employment income is rather low. Hence, at this age, men and women have relatively similar employment income.

## Woman's Contribution to Family Employment Income

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As families in which both spouses work are now a majority, one may expect women's share of family employment income to have increased over time. Has this happened?

Women's contribution to the family's employment income depends on a number of factors, among them the work status (full- or part-time) of each family member, the number of other contributors, and the type of occupation and industry in which they are employed, to name just a few. In this section, we examine married women and women in common-law unions who reported having employment income in the year preceding the census, regardless of their work status and whether they worked full-year or part-year.

Generally speaking, women's contribution to family employment income declines as the family's income increases. This phenomenon is largely a reflection of their partner's earnings. For example, among families with low incomes, women's contribution is relatively high because their partner is probably poorly paid, out of work or had not worked the full year. Among families with high income, women's contribution accounts for a smaller proportion, and the family's income undoubtedly reflects their partner's high employment income.

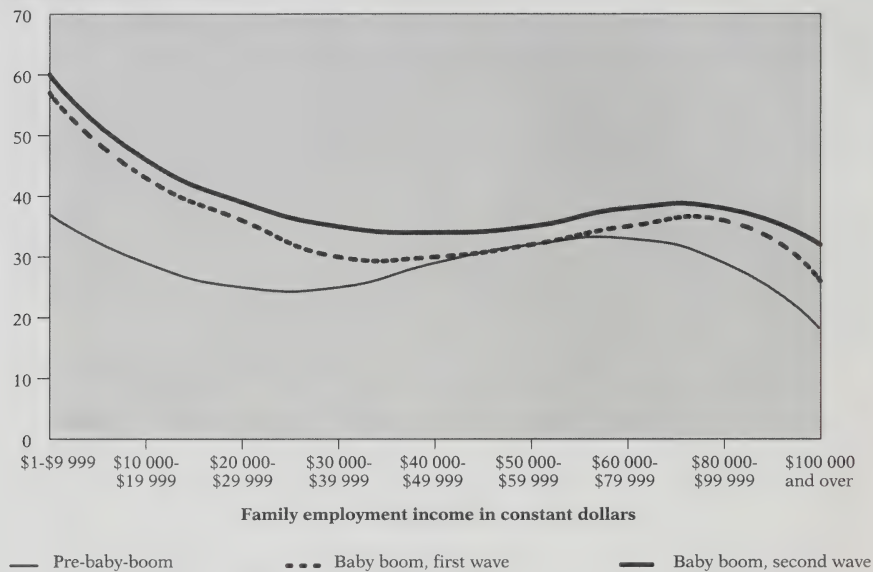
It is interesting to note that women's contribution increases slightly when family employment income is somewhat above average. This may be due to a large proportion of husband-wife professional couples, among whom women are almost as likely as men to work full-year full-time. The fact that the contribution of other family members (most often the partner) remains higher than that of women may partly reflect the earnings gap between men and women.<sup>4</sup>

If we now compare the contributions of women in the first three groups (pre-baby-boom, first-wave and second-wave baby boomers) at the same age (26 to 35), we also note an increase in women's contribution at all family employment income levels (**Chart 4.2**). Second-wave female baby boomers therefore make the highest contribution at all female employment income levels.

**Chart 4.2**

**Contribution of Women 26 to 35 Years of Age to Average Family Employment Income by Group**

Contribution in percentage



Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

**Table 4.4**  
**Contribution of Married or Common-law Status Women to Average Family**  
**Employment Income**

Groupe	1971		1981			1991				
	Pre-baby-boom	1st wave	Pre-baby-boom	1st wave	2nd wave	Pre-baby-boom	1st wave	2nd wave	Post-baby-boom	
	Age	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years	36 to 45 years	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years	46 to 55 years	36 to 45 years	26 to 35 years	16 to 25 years
Percentage										
Family employment income <sup>1</sup>										
(constant 1990 dollars)										
Total <sup>2</sup>	29 <sup>3</sup>	34	30	33	34	31	33	36	36	
\$1 to \$9,999	37	41	62	57	53	68	61	60	53	
\$10,000 to \$19,999	29	34	46	43	41	54	48	46	42	
\$20,000 to \$29,999	25	30	37	36	35	47	43	39	36	
\$30,000 to \$39,999	25	32	30	30	33	38	36	35	35	
\$40,000 to \$49,999	29	35	29	30	34	34	33	34	36	
\$50,000 to \$59,999	32	36	29	32	35	32	33	35	37	
\$60,000 to \$79,999	33	35	31	35	36	31	33	38	37	
\$80,000 to \$99,999	29	28	32	36	32	30	35	38	35	
\$100,000 and over	18	18	25	26	22	26	30	32	27	

1. Employment income refers to the year preceding the census.
  2. Negative employment income is included in the calculation of shares for all family employment income brackets.
  3. For example, the 29% figure means that the average employment income of pre-baby-boom women in 1970 was equal to 29% of the average employment income of all members of the family combined.
- Sources: Statistics Canada, unpublished data, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.



## Conclusion

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The most striking finding of this study is the spectacular rise in women's labour market participation rates, regardless of year of birth. Furthermore, the younger the age group, the greater was the increase. Women born during the first 10 years of the baby boom (i.e., the first wave) seem to have led the way. These women display the highest growth in participation rate from 1971 to 1991 and demonstrate the most radical break from the preceding group. It appears that some of the first-wave baby boomers began by following a more traditional path (staying at home and raising children) and only joined the labour market later. The same phenomenon occurred in the group born before the baby boom, who joined the workforce even later in life. The groups who followed strengthened this new trend so that participation in the labour market is now standard behaviour for all women.

Labour force participation has been accompanied by a number of changes in attitude, translating into such things as more education, waiting longer before entering into a relationship and having children, and a drop in fertility. These are important factors in determining women's new position in the labour market.

In addition to women, the labour market had to absorb, the many men born during the baby boom. Following years of weak economic growth, a glut in the labour supply had gradually built up. This is reflected in the steady rise in unemployment rates observed in successively younger groups and in an accompanying decrease in real employment income. Those hardest hit by these two phenomenon are the young women born after the baby boom.

Taking into account a new situation that is, at the very least, difficult for all workers -- that is, the creation of mainly temporary or part-time positions -- it will be interesting to see how labour market policies will address women's aspirations for equity and access to better paid jobs.





## Notes

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### Notes to Chapter 1

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- 1 Participation rate is defined as the proportion of the population aged 16 years and over that is either employed or unemployed.

### Notes to Chapter 2

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- 1 Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, unpublished data, 1961.
- 2 The drop in this proportion for women with 13 years of schooling or less may be attributable in part to the fact that new immigrants are included in the group studied.
- 3 The change is reflected in the fact that, for example, Canadians are increasingly delaying the time at which they establish a household and begin to have children. They remain students for far longer and participation of women in the labour market is an accepted activity: therefore, families in which both spouses work outside the home is now the norm.
- 4 Galarneau, D. "Alimony and Child Support" in *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Summer 1992, Vol. 4, No. 2.
- 5 Powell, L.M. "Toward Child Care Policy Development in Canada", in *Social Policy in a Global Economy*, published under the direction of Terrance M. Hunsley, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University Press, 1992.

## Notes to Chapter 3

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- 1 Labour Force Survey data reveal the same shift and indicate that the number of adult women in white-collar occupations in 1993 was twice as high as in 1976. This increase was largely attributable to the "Professional, managerial and administrative" category, which included over 50% of white-collar women in 1993, compared to less than 40% in 1976. (Labour force annual averages, "Employment Trends by Occupation", Catalogue No. 71-220, 1993, p. A3-A9.)
- 2 Stout, C.W. "A Degree of Change" in *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Winter 1992, Vol.4, No. 4.
- 3 Sunter, D. "School, Work and Dropping Out" in *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Summer 1993, Vol. 5, No. 2.
- 4 Noreau, N. "Le temps partiel non choisi", in *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Fall 1994, Vol. 6, No. 3.
- 5 Mayer, F. "Impact of Part-Time Work Experience on the Duration of Unemployment in Canada: a Comparative Study of Men and Women", paper presented to the Workshop on Economic Equality, Status of Women Canada, November 1993.
- 6 Light, A. and Ureta, M. "Panel Estimates of Male and Female Job Turnover Behavior: Can Female Nonquitters be Identified?", in *Journal of Labor Economics*, 10(2), 1992.
- 7 Lindeboom, M. and Theeuwes, J. "Job Duration in the Netherlands: the Co-Existence of High Turnover and Permanent Job Attachment", in *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 53(3), 1991.
- 8 Blank, R.M. "The role of Part-Time Work in Women's Labour Market Choices Over Time", in *American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings*, 79(2), May 1989.
- 9 It should be added, however, that part-time work is sometimes considered a solution to the unemployment problem. This option, after being adopted by a number of European firms, is now reaching our borders. Domestic companies are beginning to reduce the number of working days per week rather than opting for layoffs. If the trend continues, some of the negative aspects associated with part-time work may disappear as this work pattern becomes more common.
- 10 According to Labour Force Survey data, the number of self-employed women almost tripled between 1976 and 1993 (from 206,000 to 590,000); for men, it climbed 57% (from 842,000 to 1,322,000).

## Notes to Chapter 4

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- 1 Morissette, R., Myles, J., Picot, G. "What is happening to Earnings Inequality in Canada?", Analytical Studies Branch, Research paper No. 60, Statistics Canada, December 1993.
- 2 The "link" to the labour market refers to a somewhat abstract concept. However, when this link becomes stronger, it translates into decreasingly sporadic and increasingly full-time participation by women in the labour market, in spite of inevitable stoppages due to child-birth and child-bearing.
- 3 These indices cannot be used as a measure of salary equity between men and women, since employment income also depends on occupation and the industry in which the individual works, variables not accounted for in Table 4.3.
- 4 This comparison is biased in favour of women since it includes only those women who worked during the reference year, whether their partner worked or not. It is likely that women's contribution to low-income family employment income is higher than it would have been if the same selection criterion had been applied to men, that is, if only men who had worked had been included.





# Female Baby Boomers: A Generation at Work

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